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ABSTRACT

This study verified the educational value orientations of junior and senior undergraduate preservice teachers and their professors of education in one teacher education program. The study used the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI), which includes five competing educational value orientations: Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO), Learning Process Orientation (LPO), Self-Actualization Orientation (SAO), Ecological Integration Orientation (EIO), and Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO). Researchers revised the VOI to reflect curricular decision-making choices of preservice teachers. Study participants were 31 preservice teachers and 8 professors of education. All students were Caucasian, and all but one were female. Six professors were female, and two professors were minority. Participants completed the VOI. Results indicated that student teachers and professors demonstrated at least one significant difference in their value orientations. Student teachers demonstrated less preference for the importance of the DMO than did faculty. Students did not place as much emphasis on the DMO as they did on the LPO and SRO. Results did not support the belief that many teacher education programs lack conceptual frameworks. This teacher education program had a conceptual framework developed by its faculty. (SM)

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Verifying The Educational Value Orientations in the Curricular Decision Making Process of Pre-Service Teachers

Introduction

Beliefs and values play a critical role in the decisions teachers make (McNeil, 1990). In most curricular areas, teachers are free to make curricular decisions and to determine much of the content to be taught and how that content is to be taught. Many curricular theorists, for example Eisner and Vallance (1974), have hypothesized that the rationale for making curricular decisions is based on a set of educational beliefs or value orientations. Solomon and Ashy (1995) explain that value orientations embody philosophical perspectives which can be defined in educational contexts as definitions or goals for student learning. In short, explicit, as well as implicit, beliefs about students, educational contexts, and content knowledge are consolidated within value orientations. The purpose of this investigation was to verify the educational value orientations of junior and senior pre-service teachers and their respective professors of education in one teacher education program to enable review of the division's conceptual framework.

The Value Orientation Inventory (VOI)

The Value Orientation Inventory (VOI), first developed by Ennis and Hooper (1988) and later refined by Ennis and Chen (1993), has been used in several studies to describe physical educators' value profiles and to provide a rationale for teachers' curricular and instructional decisions documented in schools (Ennis, Ross, & Chen, 1992; Ennis & Zhu, 1991). According to Ennis, Ross, and Chen (1992), curriculum theorists have hypothesized that the value system or orientation that teachers bring to the curricular decision-making process determines, in part, their goals for student learning and academic and behavioral expectations for success. The Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) is comprised of five competing educational value orientations: The Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO), Learning Process Orientation (LPO), Self-Actualization Orientation (SAO) Ecological Integration Orientation (EIO), and Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO).

The Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO) places a high priority on the extension of the knowledge base or transmission of information to students. An example of an item representing this orientation is "I will require my students to spend class time practicing reading and writing skills emphasized in the daily objectives."

The fundamental goal of the Learning Process Orientation (LPO) is the application of knowledge or concepts to new situations, or teaching students to learn independently. An example of an item representing this orientation is "I will teach my students to perform complex skills by combining simple procedures."

The Self-Actualization Orientation (SAO) focuses on nurturing student growth and the individual nature of the learner. An example of an item representing this orientation is "I will teach my students to be self-directed and to keep themselves going in the right direction."

The Ecological Integration Orientation (EIO) focuses on the dynamic, interactive nature of school settings where the group is just as important as the individual. An example of an item representing this orientation is "I will teach my students to select the best option or strategy to balance their needs with those of the class."

The Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO) focuses on cooperation, participation, and teamwork in the classroom. An example of an item representing this orientation is "I will encourage my students to be sensitive to other students' problems and to work to help them."

After doing literature and research reviews on content representativeness and in an effort to provide evidence of construct validity and estimates of reliability, Ennis and Chen (1993) revised the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI). This revision resulted in the development of domain specifications and new Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) items. The Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) is a 90-item inventory consisting of eighteen sets of five items reflecting each of the five value orientations.

Items on the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) are unlabeled and placed randomly in sets. The respondent rank orders the items within each set from 5 (highest priority) to 1 (lowest priority) to reflect her/his preference. The value profile consists of the composite scores from each of the five value orientations.

Methods and Data Sources

For the purpose of this study, items in the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) were revised to reflect curricular decision making choices of pre-service teachers who will be teaching reading and writing within the content area subjects. Thirty-one junior and senior pre-service students and eight professors of education participated in this study. All but one of the students were female; all were Caucasian. The students completed the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) once as part of regular class activity. No treatment was attempted. Six of the professors were female, and two were male; one professor was Asian American, and one was African American. The professors completed the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI) once as part of a professional development activity. Data from nine data sets reflecting the Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO), the Learning Process Orientation (LPO), and the Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO) were analyzed. Results are presented in Table 1.

Conclusions

To verify the educational value orientations of junior and senior pre-service teachers and their respective professors of education, this teacher education program used the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI). Analysis of the data revealed that its students and faculty do demonstrate at least one significant difference in their value orientations. The students demonstrated less preference for the importance of the Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO) than did the faculty. See Table 1. Moreover the students did not place as much emphasis on the Disciplinary Mastery Orientation as they did on the Learning Process Orientation (LPO) and the Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO). See Table 1.

However, the belief that many teacher education programs lack conceptual frameworks (Solomon & Ashy, 1995) was not supported by this investigation in that this teacher education program does indeed have a conceptual framework developed by its faculty. See Appendix I. Moreover, both faculty and students indicate above average priorities for two orientations Learning Process Orientation (LPO) and Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO). See Table 1.

A close reading of a section of the the teacher education document which describes the program's conceptual frameworks indicates a moderate level of importance in the Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO) and the Learning Process Orientation (LPO), but reveals a major emphasis on the Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO). See Appendix I.

However, the perception that personnel in teacher education programs emphasize content (Solomon & Ashy, 1995) was not supported by this investigation at this institution. In their responses on the Value Orientation Inventory (VOI), faculty placed almost equal emphasis on the Disciplinary Mastery Orientation (DMO), the Learning Process Orientation (LPO), and the Social Responsibility Orientation (SRO). See Table 1.

Implications

More research which examines the consequences of pre-service teachers' curricular decision-making priorities before their induction into school settings as full time professionals is needed. Investigations like this one might be replicated with more emphasis on and closer analysis of the curricular units developed by the students. No doubt, "Consideration of pre-service teachers' value profiles as they progress through pre-service programs . . . [could] enable teacher educators to more effectively structure course and field experiences for teachers in training" (Solomon & Ashy, 1995, p. 229).

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Table 1

Student and Faculty VOI Results

	DMO (Disciplinary Mastery)		LPO (Learning Process)		SRO (Social Responsibility)	
	students n = 32	faculty n =8	students n = 32	faculty n = 8	students n =32	faculty n =8
Set 1	3.32	4	2.93	3	3.51	4.25
Set 2	2.99	3	3.35	3.75	3.25	4.12
Set 3	2.22	3.5	3	2.62	4.06	3.5
Set 4	2.74	4.12	3.9	3.87	2.87	2.62
Set 5	2.32	3.12	2.87	3.87	3.7	2.62
Set 6	2.7	3.5	3.41	3.37	1.58	3.37
Set 7	2.45	3	3.12	3	3.29	3.12
Set 8	1.87	2.25	2.93	3.25	3.48	3.25
Set 9	2.77	2.25	3.32	3.75	3.45	3.12
Mean =	**2.6**	**3.19**	**3.2**	**3.39**	**3.24**	**3.33**

Appendix 1

William Woods University Teacher Education Conceptual Frameworks

In teaching the "whole" student, our curriculum must include a review of new research on multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, health, fitness, and nutrition and their roles in the learning process. Our belief is that with knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, the ability to select curricula appropriate to diverse groups, and the ability to asses student performance as well as one's own, we can empower pre-service, novice and master educators with the skills to be successful as curricular decision makers and leaders in education.

Our curriculum recognizes that teaching is an ethical and moral act. Because of recent evidence of a lack of core societal values and ethics among young people, we feel we must include character education in our curriculum. Faculty members model ethical and moral decision-making in their relationships with students and demonstrate respect, efficacy, and reflection. Our curriculum provide transferences from pre-service students having moral and ethical knowledge to internalization of that knowledge to serve as a basis for decision-making regarding teaching dilemmas.

Because our focus is on the moral dimensions of schooling and education, we place great emphasis on the importance of individuals as life-long learners and stress the importance of communities, the responsibilities that individuals have in communities, and the role of both of these in a democratic society. Underlying our program is the belief that all students, birth through grade 12, should have equal access to a quality education and effective teachers who expect all students to be successful.

underlining = Disciplinary Mastery Orientation
double underlining = Learning Process Orientation
italics = Social Responsibility Orientation